

LATEST NEWS # 324, August 17, 2005

The following news concerns Finland.

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Finland's Christians deliver Bible message to athletes and fans

FINLAND — As athletes and spectators from across the world gathered recently in Helsinki for the World Championships, so Christian organisations and churches also came together to ensure that, amid the highs and lows of the competitions, the Word of God was heard as widely as possible. Among them was the Finnish Bible Society.



Every day between August 6 and 14, Christian events of many different kinds were held under the auspices of the *More Than Gold* sports ministry initiative. Taking place in venues including churches, a youth club, a shopping centre and a park, the events had a strongly international flavour. In Helsinki Cathedral, for example, the *Jesus* film was shown several times each day in a total of 12 different languages, while Helsinki's many international Christian fellowships opened their doors to visiting speakers of languages including English, Russian, Estonian, Amharic, Arabic and Lingala. The Free Church of Helsinki literally combined the Championships and Christian ministry by inviting people into its building to watch the competitions on a giant screen, while street performances by dance and drama groups took the Gospel message out into the heart of the crowds. Children were the focus of an 'Action Day' at Kaisaniemi Park which included trampolining, dancing, games and face painting, and the nearby God's Gas youth club offered 24-hour prayer and a range of creative activities.

The Finnish Bible Society's contribution to the outreach effort took the form of a special edition of the Gospel of John bearing the *More Than Gold* logo. During the course of the Championships, 40,000 copies of this publication, which contains testimonies of javelin thrower Arto Härkönen, triple jumper Jonathan Edwards and walker Sari Essayah, were distributed on the streets and at the athletics events in a bag which also contained a bottle

of water - designed to symbolise Jesus Christ as the Living Water – and a set of brochures.

“I’m thankful that I opened my Bible and found the unfailing and eternal treasure which I never knew before,” writes Mr Härkönen in his testimony. “It is great to be a successful international athlete. I’m thankful for my victory in the Olympic Games and my career as an athlete, but it is an even greater thing to have the personal treasure of eternal victory.” (386 words – FINLAND.17.08.05)

Photo:

*FIN05DJ-1: The front and back covers of the special 'More Than Gold' edition of the Gospel of John produced by the Finnish Bible Society for the World Athletics Championship in Helsinki in August 2005. Helsinki, Finland.
Finnish Bible Society*

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